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SUBJECT: KOSOVO REQUESTS NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNER FOR
KOSOVO SECURITY FORCE

Classified By: Ambassador Tina S. Kaidanow for Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Minister of the Kosovo Security Force Fehmi Mujota sent a letter to the Ambassador on May 13 requesting entry into the United States National Guard State Partnership Program. Embassy has forwarded this letter through channels, and USNATO informed us on May 18 that SHAPE had sent the request to the National Guard Bureau. Post strongly supports the implementation of the State Partnership Program in Kosovo in the near term, rather than delaying until the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) reaches full operating capacity. The KSF is on the verge of initial operating capacity, and it is ready to receive training and build mentoring relationships beyond what it is receiving from KFOR. The presence of a National Guard state partner will enhance NATO's own program for developing the KSF. As the KSF builds its numbers and grows into its job, a strong partnership with the National Guard will contribute to our policy goal of creating a professional security force. Starting this partnership early in the KSF's growth cycle will help ensure a solid foundation for this new institution. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) On May 13, Fehmi Mujota, Minister of the Kosovo Security Force, made a formal request for entry into the United States National Guard State Partnership Program. Per guidance that General McKinley, National Guard Bureau Chief, shared with us during a February 2009 visit, we sent the request to SACEUR via USNATO. On May 18, USNATO informed us that SHAPE had forwarded a copy of Mujota's letter to the National Guard Bureau. Embassy fully endorses this request for assigning a state partner to work with Kosovo's nascent Kosovo Security Force (KSF).

¶3. (C) The KSF will reach its initial operating capacity (IOC) on September 15, with IOC defined as meeting civilian protection capabilities for explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), search and rescue, hazardous materials handling (HAZMAT), firefighting, and humanitarian assistance tasks. At IOC, the KSF expects to number approximately 1800 of the force's planned 2500-member full strength staffing.

¶4. (C) Currently, KFOR's Military Civil Advisory (MCA) Division is responsible for training the KSF and is assisting with induction training for new KSF selectees among other programs. Within the civilian-led Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force (MKSF), the NATO Assistance Team (NAT)

provides guidance on developing policies and procedures for the new ministry. Both programs offer crucial assistance to Kosovo's new security sector, but the demands are manifold, and neither program is sufficient for meeting all of the KSF's needs.

15. (C) As it stands now, the MCA Division offers initial training focused on core capabilities and some new tasks, including peace support and security police. This initial training does not include a longer-term training continuum, and a National Guard state partnership can help fill this void, also providing benefits stemming from exchange programs that will expose new KSF members to professional U.S. military standards early in their careers.

16. (C) According to OSD's June 2008 Kosovo Defense Policy memo, prevailing USG policy recommends withholding a state partnership arrangement until the KSF has reached full operating capacity (FOC), projected to occur in 2010 or 2011.

The NATO Assistance Team's director told us on June 5 that FOC will be too late if we want to ensure development of a quality security force following modern, NATO standards. The KSF is entering its formative stage, and quality assistance and mentoring relationships established now will provide a foundation for the KSF's continuing development. To date, KFOR has restricted national contingents in their interaction with the KSF. However, on June 8, JFC Naples -- relaying a SACEUR message -- informed Minister Mujota that, after the KSF reaches IOC, KFOR contributing nations may direct their contingents to assist with KSF follow-on training beyond the initial MCA induction training. This change in policy opens

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the door for bilateral relationships that will allow the KSF to cooperate with and seek assistance from forces beyond KFOR, and a state partnership would fall within the scope of this policy.

17. (C) COMMENT: The GOK recognizes that the KSF needs professional development, and it is looking for assistance. Embassy believes that establishing a state partnership with the KSF will be mutually beneficial. For us, with an Office for Defense Cooperation (ODC) due to initiate work in Kosovo in the coming months, a state partnership will enhance the cooperation and assistance that we are already offering and will insure that our investments in the KSF continue to pay dividends. We have every interest in ensuring the development of a professional KSF that fulfills the goals outlined in the Ahtisaari Plan, offering civil protection without threatening regional stability. For Kosovo, the benefits are also significant. The KSF is a new force receiving only the most basic introductory training from NATO. We believe that providing a National Guard state partner early in the development cycle is an important investment that will ensure the KSF moves toward FOC and develops into the kind of security force we want to see. END COMMENT
KAIDANOW